681. e. 23
2

AN AUTHENTIC

ACCOUNT

OF THE

PART

TAKEN BY THE LATE

K Pitt (W.)

EARL OF CHATHAM

IN A

TRANSACTION

Which paſſed in the Beginning of the Year 1778.

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ДИССЕРТАЦИЯ

AN AUTHENTIC

ACCOUNT, &c.

[N. B. The letters *(a)* *(b)*, *&c.* refer to the ſame letters in the APPENDIX which is ſubjoined to this account.]

VARIOUS falſe reports having been induſtriouſly propagated, concerning a negociation, (if it may be ſo called) ſaid to have been carried on between the Earl of Bute and the late Earl of Chatham, it has been thought indiſpenſibly neceſſary to draw up a diſtinct and authentic account, from papers now in poſſeſſion of the Earl of Chatham's family, of what did paſs relative to that affair, that it may appear, whether the tranſaction did, or did not, originate from Lord Chatham; and that it may be clearly aſcertained, what were his ſentiments and diſpoſition with regard to it.

It appears, *(a)* that various converſation had paſſed between Sir James Wright and Dr. Addington, relative to Lord Bute and Lord Chatham, previous to the third of February, 1778, but that Lord Chatham was in no wiſe appriſed of this, till the above-mentioned day, on which Dr. Addington went to Hayes, and read to Lord Chatham the following extract of a letter, which the Doctor informed him, he had that morning received from Sir James Wright:

No. I.—*Extract of a letter from Sir James Wright to Dr. Addington.*

" As I immediately, on my return from Lord Bute's, took down in ſhort " hand the principal heads of it, I think I ſhall not deviate materially from " the very words of the converſation, at leaſt if the ſpirit of his Lordſhip's " language is debilitated, the eſſential matter of it is the ſame.

" I told Lord Bute, that a friend of mine, whoſe honour and ſincerity I " could rely upon, had hinted to me (* that he thought Lord Chatham had

* The truth of this part is expreſsly denied by Dr. Addington in his *Narrative*, in which the Doctor declares, that to the beſt of his remembrance, Lord Chatham had never once named Lord Bute to him. *(b)* *(b)*

" a high opinion of his Lordſhip's honour, as well as his ſincere good wiſhes " for the public ſafety). He enquired who my friend was? I told him it " was you. He replied, I know he is much Lord Chatham's friend; I " know alſo, that he is an honeſt man, and a man of ſenſe. I related to him " the converſation that had paſſed between yourſelf and me, at our laſt meet- " ing. He ſaid, Lord Chatham was one of the very few he had ever acted " with in Adminiſtration, who had ſhewn great honeſty and generoſity of " ſentiment, with a ſincere conduct, and intention for the King's and the " public welfare.

" That as for himſelf, he ſaid, he had no connection with any one in Ad- " miniſtration; that he had not the leaſt diſtant friendſhip with Lord North, " or he ſhould certainly adviſe him, by all means, to aim at gaining Lord " Chatham over to the King's ſervice and confidence; and, ſaid he, you " may tell your friend, Dr. Addington, to aſſure Lord Chatham, that if he " ſhould think proper to take an active part in Adminiſtration, he ſhall have " my moſt hearty concurrence, and ſincere good wiſhes; and you have my " full leave to communicate all my ſentiments on this ſubject to your friend. " He continued ſaying many very reſpectful things of Lord Chatham, adding, " had we not unfortunately diſagreed about the laſt peace, I am ſure he and " I ſhould have continued ſuch ſteady friends, that this country never would " have experienced her preſent ſevere misfortunes. He alſo ſaid, the prior " part of Lord Chatham's laſt ſpeech, was manly and conſtitutional, and " could not but induce every one, a well-wiſher to his country, to wiſh to " ſee him again take a part in the government of the King's affairs, which " would be a happineſs for the whole empire. He continued ſaying, perhaps " we have men of abilities in the Houſe of Lords, but thoſe in Adminiſtration " (except Lord Suffolk, who is uſually ill half the year) are none of them " ſufficiently ſerious, or attentive enough to the buſineſs of the nation, which " is now of ſo much conſequence, as not to be neglected in the leaſt degree. " He therefore could not ſay he had a good opinion of their conduct. He " alſo ſaid, in the courſe of the converſation, that nothing but the moſt im- " minent danger to this country, ſhould induce him to take a part in the " Government of it, unleſs in conjunction with an upright and able Admi- " niſtration.

" Much more was ſaid, but of leſs moment; however, all tended to con- " vince me, that there are not two other men in the kingdom more faithfully " inclined to the good and ſafety of our preſent diſtracted nation, than our " two noble friends."

[This letter was dated January 2, it ſhould have been February 2, having been received by Dr. Addington on February 3.]

Lord Chatham dictated the following meſſage in anſwer, which was taken down in writing by Dr. Addington, a copy of which was delivered by him to Sir James Wright:

No. II.

No. II.—*Copy of a note given by Doctor Addington to Sir James Wright.*

" Lord Chatham heard with particular ſatisfaction, the favourable ſentiments " on his ſubject of the noble Lord, with whom you had talked with regard " to the impending ruin of the kingdom. He fears all hope is precluded, " but adds, that zeal, duty, and obedience, may outlive hope; that if any " thing can prevent the conſummation of public ruin, it can only be *new* " *Counſels*, and *new Counſellors*, without farther loſs of time; a *real change* " from a ſincere conviction of paſt errors, and not a mere palliation, which " muſt prove fruitleſs."

It appears from Dr. Addington's Narrative, *(c)* that the Doctor then proceeded to inform Lord Chatham of the ſubſtance of thoſe parts of the converſation which had paſſed between him and Sir James Wright, which are not recited in Sir James's letter of Feb. 2d, No. I.

The account of this, as well as what paſſed at that time, in converſation between Lord Chatham and Dr. Addington, and particularly Lord Chatham's declaration, " that it was impoſſible for him to ſerve the King and " Country with either Lord Bute or Lord North" is contained in Dr. Addington's Narrative. *(c)*

On the 7th of February, Dr. Addington ſent the following letter to Hayes;

No. III.—*Copy of a letter from Dr. Addington, to the Earl of Chatham, dated Wigmore-ſtreet, Saturday two o'clock.*

" My good Lord,

" Sir James Wright took a correct copy of the valuable writing entruſted " to my care, between twelve and one yeſterday. At one he waited on his " friend, and I was to call in Brook-ſtreet for his anſwer at half paſt two. I " was punctual to the time; Sir James had been at home, but a few minutes " before my arrival had been called back to his friend. I waited half an " hour, and then left a letter, requeſting the favour of a line from Sir James, " before he went out of town. At five, I received a ſhort note, ſaying that " his ſtay in town could be of no ſervice, and that he would give me an " account by the poſt this day of his converſation with ——. Perhaps more per- " ſons than one were to be conſulted before an account could be given. As far " as I could learn, all parties would be pleaſed with your Lordſhip and " Lord Camden, and that no objection was likely to be made to more than " one of your Lordſhip's friends. Sir James Wright aſked what was meant " by the words " real change." I thought they wanted no explanation. He " thought they included his friend, as well as the Miniſtry, and wiſhed that " your Lordſhip and his friend could have an interview, but gave me no " commiſſion to mention his wiſhes. He only added, that he really believed

" it was in the power of your Lordſhip and his friend to ſave the nation; I " only added that I believed the King and your Lordſhip could ſave the " nation, and that his friend might be inſtrumental to its ſalvation, by turn- " ing the Royal mind from paſt errors. I hope your Lordſhip and Lady " Chatham go on well, and that I ſhall have the happineſs of paying my " reſpects to you both in Harley-ſtreet, on Monday. I moſt heartily congra- " tulate my Lady and your Lordſhip on the ſafe arrival of Mr. James Pitt.

" I am ever, my dear and good Lord,

" your moſt faithful, and

" obliged humble Servant,

" A. ADDINGTON."

Wigmore-ſtreet, two o'clock, Saturday.

The ſame night Lord Chatham wrote with his own hand the following note, in anſwer to Dr. Addington, which was received by the Doctor the next morning:

No. IV.—*Copy of a note from the Earl of Chatham to Dr. Addington.*

Hayes, Feb. 7.

" The converſations which a certain gentleman has found means to have " with you, are on his part of a nature too inſidious, and to my feelings too " offenſive, to be continued, or *unrejected*. What can this officious emiſſary " mean, by all the nonſenſe he has at times thrown out to you? The next " attempt he makes to ſurprize friendly integrity by courtly inſinuation, let " him know that his great patron and your village friend differ in this*, one " has brought the King and kingdom to ruin, the other would ſincerely " endeavour to ſave it."

Dr. Addington, on the 8th of February, ſent to Lord Chatham at Hayes the following letter, (encloſing one which he had received that day from Sir James Wright, ſoon after the receipt of the above note from Lord Chatham:)

No. V.—*Copy of a letter from Dr. Addington to the Earl of Chatham.*

" I am infinitely obliged to you, my dear Lord, for your kind and friendly " caution againſt ſurpriſe and inſinuation. It ſhall never be forgotten, and " when I ſee the gentleman next (which perhaps may be to-morrow) your " Lordſhip's wiſe and noble commands ſhall be literally obeyed. The en- " cloſed letter, which was promiſed to come yeſterday by the poſt, arrived this " morning, by a ſpecial meſſenger. It needs no comment of mine; I am

* Sir James had told the Doctor, and the Doctor had told Lord Chatham, that Lord Chatham and Lord Bute did not differ in political ſentiments, which the Doctor thinks might occaſion the laſt ſentence in Lord Chatham's note.

" ſure

"ſure your Lordſhip will underſtand the language and drift of it, much "better than I can, or any body elſe. I am impatient to ſee your Lordſhip "in town, and pray a few minutes with you to-morrow. The time is come "for you and you only to ſave a King and kingdom. Your Lordſhip knows "that I am ever

"Your moſt faithful, and moſt "
"affectionate humble Servant,

"*Feb.* 8, 1778. A. ADDINGTON."

No. VI.—*Copy of a letter from Sir James Wright to Dr. Addington.*

Ray-Houſe, Feb. 7, 1778.

"My dear Doctor,

"I communicated our converſation of yeſterday to my friend, ſoon after "I left you, and then ſhewed him a copy of the paper you allowed me to "tranſcribe. You will eaſily recollect, on my firſt reading it over with you, "the obſervation I made on the particular expreſſion in it, "A *real* change, "and not a mere palliation;" namely, that your noble friend ſtill thought "that Lord Bute had influence in the meaſures of Adminiſtration. In the "very ſame light he alſo conſtrued this expreſſion; he therefore deſired me "to inform you, for the inſtruction of your friend, that the ill health he had "long been ſubject to, united with the diſtreſſes of his family, had accuſ-"tomed him to a perfect retired life, which he hoped, as long as he lived, "ſteadily to adhere to; he added, that his long abſence from all ſort of "public buſineſs, and the many years which had intervened ſince he ſaw "the King, precluded him from forming any idea of meaſures paſt or to "come, but what he gathers from very general converſation, or the news-"papers; and this total ignorance, he ſaid, renders the opinion given of the "preſent dangerous criſis more alarming to him than it would otherwiſe be, "and much more painful, as, notwithſtanding his zeal for the country, love "for the King, and very high opinion of Lord Chatham, he has it not in "his power to be of the leaſt uſe in this dangerous emergency; and that "from his heart he wiſhed Lord Chatham every imaginable ſucceſs in the "reſtoration of the public welfare.

"I think, my dear Doctor, this was almoſt verbatim my friend's con-"verſation; at leaſt I am confident it is a fac-ſimile of his real ſentiments; "and you ſee how very diſtant they are from the leaſt inclination ever to in-"terfere in the preſent or any future Adminiſtration, which your noble friend "ſeemed to apprehend. May he extend the powers of his own great and "honeſt abilities, to heal the dreadful wounds, which this poor country has "received from what he very wiſely calls *paſt errors*. Without his head, as "well as heart, I fear all is loſt. I remember poor Lord Northington ſaying "to me more than once, not long before his death, that "as I was a young "man, I ſhould probably live to ſee (if I ſurvived Lord Chatham and a few

"other

" other great men) that this country would not only want abilities but hearts;
" and that our ſtate would then be really piteous, where both knowledge
" and integrity were wanting to protect us." Pray God your noble friend
" may ſtep forth before this ſorrowful epocha arrives, and ſtem the dreadful
" tide of profligacy, inattention to buſineſs, and barefaced immorality, which
" daily encreaſe in every department of life, and muſt bring down ruin, and
" the diſſolution of our country.

" That firſt quality of *knowledge*, which Lord Northington lamented the
" extinction of in this country, I ſhall never preſume to be entitled to; but
" that of integrity I dare aſſert my claim to; and in that particular I hold
" myſelf inferior to no man: I only wiſh it was in my power to give your
" great and invaluable friend the moſt convincing proofs of this aſſertion, as
" well as of my profound veneration for him. You have known me long
" enough to be perſuaded that nothing can divert me from the love of my
" country, and the paths of an honeſt conduct; therefore ever command,
" with the utmoſt freedom, my dear Doctor,

" Your moſt faithful and ſincere friend,

" JAMES WRIGHT.

" P. S. I ſhall be in town on Tueſday about three o'clock, and ſtay till
" the following day."

The next day the following anſwer, written by the Counteſs of Chatham, was ſent to Dr. Addington:

No. VII.—*Copy of a letter from Lady Chatham to Dr. Addington, dated Feb. 9:*

" I write, my dear Sir, from my Lord's bed-ſide, who has had much
" pain all laſt night from gout in his left hand and wriſt. The pulſe indi-
" cates more pain to come. He deſires me to expreſs for him the true ſenſe
" he has of all your very friendly attention in this very delicate and critical
" ſituation. The gentleman's letter which you tranſmit is handſomely writ-
" ten, and ſufficiently explicit. At the ſame time, it is impoſſible not to
" remark, how widely it differs from the tenor of ſome of the intimations
" conveyed in former ſtrange converſations to you. The letter now before
" him is written alſo with much good ſenſe and candour, as coming from
" a heart touched with the extreme dangers impending over the King and
" Kingdom. Thoſe dangers are *indeed extreme*, and ſeem to preclude all hope.
" *Hayes, quarter before one, Feb.* 9, 1778."

From this unambiguous and authentic account, founded upon indiſputable evidence, every impartial perſon will determine whether the following propoſition is not fully eſtabliſhed: viz.

" That the late Earl of Chatham not only did not court a political nego-
" tiation with the Earl of Bute, but without heſitation, peremptorily rejected
" every idea of acting with his Lordſhip in Adminiſtration."

APPENDIX.

Dr. ADDINGTON's Narrative.

Containing his Account of what paſſed relative to this Tranſaction.

(*a*) THE firſt time Sir James Wright talked with Dr. Addington reſpecting Lord Bute and Lord Chatham was about the beginning of January, 1778. Sir James began with lamenting the ſituation of this country, and gave it as his opinion, that the only method of ſaving it was for Lord Bute and Lord Chatham to unite firmly together, but remarking, that they were two of the men the King *hated* moſt. After various converſations on this matter, Sir James ſaid Lord Bute thought Lord Chatham had a diſreſpect for him. Dr. Addington replied, (*b*) that, to the beſt of his remembrance, Lord Chatham had never once named Lord Bute to him, but that he thought Lord Chatham had no diſreſpect for Lord Bute; adding, that though they might differ in politics, Lord Chatham was not the kind of man to have diſreſpect, or bear ill will to any man. Sir James added, he was ſure Lord Bute had the higheſt reſpect for Lord Chatham; that he had heard Lord Bute beſtow great commendations on his whole ſpeech at the beginning of the ſeſſion, except that part which regarded the recall of the troops, and that the Doctor might tell Lord Chatham ſo if he pleaſed; but he never mentioned it till the 3d of February.

Nothing more paſſed till the 2d of February, when Sir James aſked the Doctor, whether he had mentioned their former converſation to Lord Chatham. He ſaid he had not; Sir James then ſaid, that ſince that converſation he had ſeen Lord Bute, and was certain he had the ſame earneſt deſire with Lord Chatham to ſave the country; and was alſo certain, that nobody could ſave it, but Lord Chatham, with the aſſiſtance of Lord Bute: that Lord Bute was ready to aſſiſt him, and would be Secretary of State in the room of Lord Weymouth: the Doctor underſtood that Lord Bute had told Sir James ſo; and he has aſked Sir James once or twice ſince, whether

Lord Bute would have been Secretary of State in Lord Weymouth's room? and he anſwered, Yes, he would, or would not, as Lord Chatham pleaſed. When Sir James had mentioned Lord Bute's readineſs to aſſiſt Lord Chatham, and to be Secretary of State, he expreſſed a wiſh that the whole which had paſſed might be communicated to Lord Chatham. The Doctor on this reſolved to go to Hayes the next morning for that purpoſe, looking upon it as a matter of very great moment. But he deſired to have in writing, before he went, the ſubſtance of what had paſſed between Lord Bute and Sir James. Sir James ſaid he had not time to write then, as he was in a hurry to go to Ray Houſe, but would write in the evening, and ſend his letter to town by nine the next morning. The Doctor, notwithſtanding, was permitted to acquaint Lord Chatham with Lord Bute's willingneſs to be Secretary of State, and, as he underſtood, with every thing elſe he has depoſed, which is not expreſſed in the letter. (Vide No. I. in the preceding account.) The letter is dated the 2d of January, 1778: it ſhould have been dated February 2d: The Doctor received it February 3d before nine in the morning, and ſet out directly for Hayes. He read the letter to Lord Chatham, who was very attentive, and in a few minutes afterwards dictated this anſwer. (Vide No. II. in the preceding account.) *(t)* As ſoon as Dr. Addington had writ and read to Lord Chatham the above anſwer, he communicated to Lord Chatham what Sir James Wright had told him of the readineſs of Lord Bute to be Secretary of State in the place of Lord Weymouth. He ſeemed to think it ſtrange. "Indeed," ſaid he, "did Sir James Wright tell you ſo?" "He certainly told me ſo."—After this, he aſked Lord Chatham, whether he had any objection to coming in with Lord Bute or Lord North? He lifted up his hands, and ſaid, "It was impoſſible for him to ſerve the King and Country "with either of them; and if any one aſks you about it, I deſire you to "bear witneſs that you heard me ſay ſo." He repeated the ſame words juſt as the Doctor was leaving him.

Sir James continued at Ray Houſe till February 5th or 6th. He called on the Doctor in the morning of the 6th, and took a correct copy of Lord Chatham's anſwer, dated February 3d. Upon reading it, he aſked what was meant by the words, "real change." It looks, ſaid he, as if they included Lord Bute as well as the Miniſtry, and as if Lord Chatham thought Lord Bute was concerned in public affairs. I can aſſure you, he has nothing to do with them, and has not ſeen the King theſe two years. If Lord Chatham has a mind to undertake the direction of public affairs, there will be no objection to his having the aſſiſtance of Lord Camden; but there are ſome he might chuſe who could not be admitted. Sir James ſaid, he was to wait on Lord Bute at one that day, and would ſend the Doctor an anſwer to Lord Chatham's paper between two and three, if Lord Bute ſhould chuſe to give any. But a misfortune happening in Lord Bute's family, no anſwer was ſent till February 8th in the morning. On the 7th of February, a ſervant of Lord Chatham's came to town, by whom Dr. Addington ſent a letter to

Hayes.

Hayes at two o'clock, giving Lord Chatham an account of the above-mentioned converſation with Sir James Wright on the 6th. On the evening of the 7th, his Lordſhip wrote the following anſwer, which the Doctor received the next morning. (Vide No. III. and No. IV. inſerted in the preceding account.)

On the 8th of February, ſoon after Lord Chatham's letter arrived, the Doctor received that letter from Sir James, which had been expected from February 6th. (Vide No. VI. in the preceding account. It is dated February 7th, and contains Lord Bute's anſwer to Lord Chatham's paper of February 3d. The Doctor ſent it immediately to Hayes, and had the next morning the following anſwer written by Lady Chatham, dated February 9th. (Vide No. VII. in the preceding account.) The Doctor communicated to Sir James Wright this letter from Lady Chatham, and alſo the latter part of that from Lord Chatham as ſoon as he could, and ſo the affair ended.

(b) P. S. In Sir James Wright's letter of February 2d, there are the following words: "I told Lord Bute that a friend of mine had hinted to "me, that he thought Lord Chatham had a high opinion of his Lordſhip's "honour, as well as his ſincere good wiſhes for the public ſafety." After reading theſe words to Lord Chatham, the Doctor could not but take notice that Sir James had miſtaken him, for all he ſaid was, that he thought Lord Chatham had no diſreſpect for Lord Bute, &c. as is ſtated above.

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